

w/b 24th June 2018

Theme: The Holy Spirit stops Paul doing 'good' stuff in Turkey and sends him to Greece!

Introduction

- Read **Acts 16:1-15**.
- Have a chat about the 'good' stuff Paul was doing in Turkey (maybe look back to the end of ch 15 for background).
- Then chat about the 'good' stuff we're involved in to build the kingdom.
- If your group is up for it, spend some time saying well done to each other for the good things you're doing for the kingdom - at Jubilee, work and home, and out and about. If some people don't reckon they are doing anything much, keep that to pray about later.

Discovery

- The Holy Spirit obviously had other plans for Paul. He stopped him going to the south east of Turkey, and to Turkey's north coast area, and seemed to be channelling him to Troas, on the coast opposite Greece. Then Paul had the night-time vision of the 'Man from Macedonia' - and hence Greece was opened up to the gospel. Talk about all that.
- Explore what might have been going on in Paul's mind as he travelled about before he had the vision. And consider why it seemed necessary for the Spirit to stop him doing things. Think about how Paul may have heard from God at different times. Have a look at a map of Turkey and Greece if you think it would help. There's one below...
- Chat briefly about the different ways God speaks to us. The Alpha course suggests 5 ways: 'commanding scripture' (the Bible), 'compelling Spirit', common sense, 'communion of the saints' (other Christians), circumstantial signs. Maybe ask how people hear most from God, and challenge them to try others.

Application

- Is there 'good' stuff that people are doing that might not be what God wants them to be doing at this point in their lives?
- In his book 'The Purpose Driven Life' Rick Warren suggests Christians have a 'primary purpose' we're called to (maybe various changing ones as we go through life) and numerous 'secondary purposes'. It is good to be involved in 'secondary purposes' because there is always work to be done for the kingdom, but if we are not involved in our 'primary purpose' we could be missing good things God has for us to do, and find ourselves dissatisfied with our Christian life - feeling there is something else we should be doing.
- Discuss this idea and pray for each other to know the 'primary purpose(s)' God has for each one, and for wisdom to know what to do when. Pray for anyone who feels stuck or a failure in things they're doing, for wisdom to know if they should persevere or stop doing them. And pray for each other for energy, understanding etc as we 'live the life'.
- At the bottom of it all, it's not about what we do so much as about who we are - ie princes and princesses in the Kingdom, children of God, greatly loved and infinitely valued by him.
- Pray for each other, that we 'have the eyes of our hearts opened' to the majesty of God and the glorious things God has for us as our inheritance (Ephesians 1:18) - all else follows from that.

